



# Oprah Winfrey, TV Host, Actress, Philanthropist



Oprah Winfrey attends a special screening of the film *The Butler*, in which she stars. © AP Images

**O**prah Winfrey is an American success story. Born into poverty in rural Mississippi in 1954, Winfrey is an enormously successful businesswoman, television host, Academy Award-winning actress, film producer and philanthropist. Best known for her award-winning talk

show *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, Winfrey has been ranked the wealthiest African American of the 20th century.

Oprah Gail Winfrey was born to a teenage single mother and endured an extremely difficult childhood. After years of hard work, she received a full

scholarship to Tennessee State University. She began working in radio and television broadcasting in Nashville at age 17. By 1984, she was hosting her own morning television show. Winfrey's emotional style and ability to connect with viewers have endeared her to millions of television viewers.



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Oprah walks with members of the first graduating class at the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa.  
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In 2004, Winfrey became the first African American to rank among the 50 most generous American philanthropists. Oprah's Angel Network, a charity she founded in 1998, raised more than \$80 million to support charitable projects and provide grants to nonprofit organizations around the world. Before it stopped accepting donations

in 2010, Winfrey personally paid all administrative costs, allowing every penny of raised funds to support charity programs. In addition, she invested \$40 million and devoted personal time to establish the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls near Johannesburg, South Africa. The state-of-the-art school opened in 2007. Its mission is to "equip

students with the intellectual and social skills necessary to assume positions of leadership in South Africa and abroad." In 2013, Winfrey donated \$12 million to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, making her the museum's largest contributor to date. The Washington museum is set to open in 2015.

